

FACT SHEET



The Oronogo-Duenweg (Jasper County) Mining Belt Site Jasper County, Missouri

August 2002

Introduction

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducts regular checkups, called five-year reviews, on Superfund sites where cleanups have been completed. The reviews are required at any site where hazardous wastes are left on site. EPA Region 7 has started the first five-year review of the Oronogo-Duenweg Mining Belt Site in Jasper County, Missouri.

EPA is conducting the five-year review to make sure the cleanup continues to protect human health and the environment.

Background

The Oronogo-Duenweg Mining Belt Site is part of the Tri-State Mining District, which covers approximately a 2,500-square mile area in southwestern Missouri, southeastern Kansas, and northeastern Oklahoma. Mining, milling, and smelting of Tri-State District lead and zinc ore dates back to 1850 and continued until the 1970s. Mining operations at the site generated 150 million tons of wastes, of which approximately 9 million tons remain today. Additionally, at least 17 smelters operated within the site, mostly in the Joplin area. After the turn of the century, all smelting in Jasper County was conducted at the Eagle-Picher smelter in northwest Joplin.

Nature and Extent of Contamination

The wastes from the mining, milling, and smelting

of the ore has resulted in the significant contamination of ground water, surface water, and surface soil. Approximately 470 homes on the eastern side of the site rely on private, shallow ground water wells for drinking water. EPA identified at least 100 of these wells as having lead and cadmium levels above established health-based action levels. At least 2,500 residential yards were contaminated with lead above acceptable levels from mining and smelting activities. Investigations of the mining wastes indicated the piles could cause significant risks to the environment, particularly fish and mammals.

Cleanup Actions to Date

EPA has established four operable units (OUs) at the site to address the risks associated with contaminated soil and water. OU1 addresses mining waste piles located at the site. OU2 addresses lead contaminated residential yard soils in the smelter area. OU3 addresses lead contaminated residential yard soils in the mining wastes areas. OU4 addresses contaminated ground water.

At OU4, EPA issued Unilateral Administrative Orders (UAOs) to the responsible parties in 1993 and 1994 to provide bottled water to homes with contaminated wells. These homes have been receiving bottled water since 1994. EPA issued a Record of Decision (ROD) in 1998 for installation of public water supply lines and point-of-use treatment units to address the contaminated private water wells. The installation of the public water supply systems is scheduled to be completed in June 2003.

For OUs 2 and 3, EPA conducted a time-critical soil removal action in 1995 and 1996 at 294 residential yards and six day care centers in the smelter area. Soil removal and replacement was completed at day care centers where soils were greater than 500 parts per million (ppm) lead and at residential yards where soils exceeded 2,500 ppm lead or where a child in the home had a blood-lead level greater than 15 micrograms per deciliter. EPA completed the residential yard cleanup under a ROD from 1996 to 2001. Residential yards at an additional 2,200 properties that exceed 800 ppm lead were remediated.

For OU 1, EPA has funded the Missouri Highway and Transportation Department to use approximately 600,000 cubic yards of mining waste as fill for construction of a highway through a portion of the site. A feasibility study is currently being conducted to address the remaining mining waste.

Five-Year Review

During the review, EPA studies information on the site, and inspects the site to make sure it continues to be safe. EPA encourages the community to inform us about site conditions or concerns they may have. At the end of the review, a final report will be prepared and will be available in the site information repositories. The report will be located at the following:

Joplin Public Library
300 Main
Joplin, Missouri

Carl Junction City Hall
105 North Main
Carl Junction, Missouri

Webb City Public Library
101 South Liberty
Webb City, Missouri

EPA Record Center
901 North 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas

If you have questions or need more information on the Oronogo-Duenweg Mining Belt Site or the five-year review process, please contact:

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